THE BEANEY
HOUSE OF ART
& KNOWLEDGE

Make Your Own **Cabinet of Curiosities**

Take inspiration from our Cabinet of Curiosities and ask you to create your own at home!

What is a Cabinet of Curiosities?

Early collectors wanted to learn about the world by looking more closely at things. People that could, would travel the world and bring back different objects to display in their homes. Often collectors would house their collections in a cabinet! Sometimes these private collections grew and grew to become public museums.

What's in The Beaney's Cabinet of Curiosities?

The cabinet at The Beaney houses an amazing collection of things:

- natural history specimens
- ancient sculptures
- a Narwhal tusk
- a Crocodile
- a Scorpion
- a model canoe
- a snow shoe
- yellow Butterflies

Can you find them in this picture?

The items in our collection help us think and learn about different times, places, animals and people!

Use this guide to create your own Cabinet of Curiosities, we'll show you some interesting items from our collection to give you some ideas.

So, what makes a good curiosity?

'a rare, unusual, or intriguing object' (dictionary definition)

A curiosity can be anything interesting, as long as it makes you think or remember something. You might find curiosities in your home or you might even make some!

To get you started take some inspiration from the rare, unusual or intriguing things at The Beaney.

In our cabinet there are things like this...

...bronze sculpture of a lizard with a man's face

Remember, not everything in a museum is a rare and valuable thing. Lots of things can tell a story, so if something is special to you then it's special enough to go in your cabinet of curiosities!

Your cabinet might have things like this...

...one of your favourite or most interesting toys!

CLOTHES AND COSTUMES

Clothes can tell us a lot of things! Clothes are different all over the world, depending on different cultures, climates and lifestyles so they can tell us a lot about people's lives. Clothes have changed throughout history, so they tell us about different times too.

19th century embroidered trousers made in Afghanistan

Explorers & Collectors Gallery, The Beaney

These amazing trousers belonged to Reverend Lansdell who was a missionary and explorer from Tenterden in Kent. He took groundbreaking journeys across Asia and beyond. He collected these trousers on one trip thinking they would be 'warm and useful' during his journeys on horseback.

Find an item of clothing or a piece of a costume from your home!

It could be something that reminds you of a particular time, a place you visited or journey you took?

SOUVENIRS AND MEMENTOS

Objects hold lots of memories, the museums are filled with objects that tell the stories of people from different times and places.

12th – 15th Century, tin-lead Pilgrim Badge

People & Places Gallery, The Beaney

Pilgrim badges like this one were made in the thousands and were bought by pilgrims travelling to Canterbury to pray at the shrine of Thomas Becket in the hope of blessings and miracle cures. Pilgrim badges were essentially religious souvenirs. They were worn on either your hat or cloak and collected as mementoes of the shrines you had visited.

Find some souvenirs or objects that you found, bought or made when you visited somewhere!

It may have been somewhere far away but it doesn't have to be, some of the most exciting journeys happen close to home.

See if you can find something natural and something that was made.

TOYS AND TRINKETS

There are a lot of toys in the museum collection, we have very old toys and toys that are quite new, we even have a Victorian doll with real human hair! Toys tell us a lot about what life was like for children throughout history.

Bagpuss, made in Blean in the 1950s.
People & Places Gallery, The Beaney

This is Bagpuss, created by Peter Firmin and Oliver Postgate. He is a famous stuffed toy cat who starred alongside a girl called Emily in animated television programmes in the 1970s. Emily found lost and broken things and displayed them in the window with her favorite toy: Bagpuss.

Find an interesting Toy in your home!

Maybe you'll choose your favourite toy or a toy that's very special to you.

You could try to find the oldest toy in your home and the newest.

Maybe you have a broken toy and you remember how it got broken!

Artworks and Artefacts

We believe that creativity, discovery and play are the best way to learn and have fun! So far you have discovered some things about the museum collection and your own. You've had a chance to play, searching your home for toys. Now it's time to get creative!

Paintings on display in the People & Places Gallery, The Beaney

Create something to display in your cabinet of curiosities!

It could be...

A painting or a drawing.

A sculpture made from clay, plasticine or play-doh.

Something you've pieced together using different things.

A photograph you've taken.

Need some inspiration? Why not make a drawing, painting or sculpture of one of your pets or someone you live with!

CONGRATULATIONS!

You're a real collector!

Now you need to curate your collection...

What does 'curate' mean?

Curating is selecting and organizing things like objects or artworks, and presenting them in an interesting and effective way!

Find something in your home to display your collection in or on.

It could be...

A cardboard box

An empty cupboard or cabinet

An empty shelf

A mantlepiece

Take a look at the objects that you have selected to work out how much space you need to display them.

Remember, if you need to borrow anything or clear a space, ask permission from an adult first!

LABELS

In museums and galleries you often see labels next to things on display. We sometimes call this 'interpretation'.

Interpretation provides people with information about the object.

Information like...

- Where it came from
- What it's made from
- How old it is
- Who made it
- Who it belonged to
- An interesting story about it

Create a small label to go next to each item in your display.

Example:

Name: Spinning Top

Material: Metal and plastic

Age: 40 years old

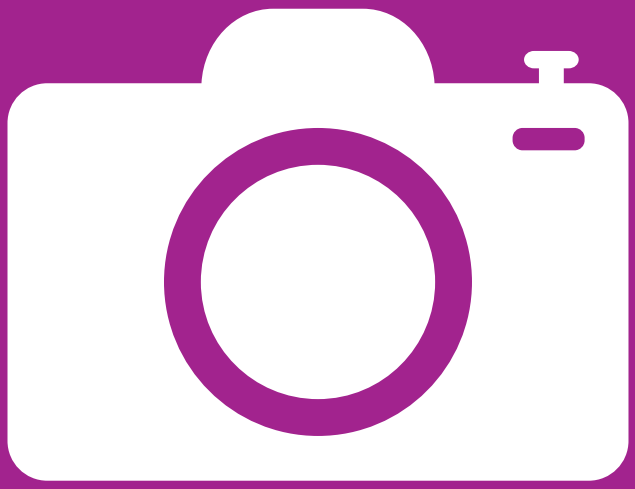
Something Interesting:

This is something my grandparents gave me, it's a toy my mum played with when she was little. We still have fun with it!

CONGRATULATIONS!

You're not just a collector, you're a curator too!

We'd love to see your Cabinet of Curiosities so please share it with us!



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